

A
P O E M

WRITTEN DURING A *3*
SHOOTING EXCURSION

ON THE
M O O R S:

BY THE
REV^d. WILLIAM GREENWOOD,
FELLOW OF ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE; AND
RECTOR OF BIGNOR, IN SUSSEX.

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T O
J O H N R E E D, Esq;

O F C H I P C H A C E,
I N N O R T H U M B E R L A N D,

T H I S P O E M, .

I S I N S C R I B E D,

A S A T E S T I M O N Y O F T H E A U T H O R ' s E S T E E M,

A N D

I N R E M E M B R A N C E

O F

T H E M A N Y H A P P Y D A Y S H E H A S P A S S E D

A T C H I P C H A C E.

TO
JOHN REED, Esq;

OF CHICAGO
IN NORTHUMBERLAND

THIS FORTH

IS INSCRIBED

AS A TESTIMONY OF THE AUTHOR'S

AND

IN REMEMBRANCE

OF

THE MANY HAPPY DAYS HE HAS PASSED

AT CHICAGO.



A

P O E M

WRITTEN DURING A SHOOTING EXCURSION
ON THE MOORS.

ENOUGH of Hunting, and its joyous train—

The pack full op'ning to the scented gale,
The horn's shrill notes, and animating found
Of sylvan harmony, when loudest bursts
Roll down the mountain side—has SOMERVILLE,
Aiding the poet's with the sportsman's fire,
Monarch of rural sports, unrivall'd sung!

B

To

To joys more tranquil,—which the champaign yields,
 Stor'd with delights to brace the languid pow'rs,
 Expand the soul, and bid health's rosy hue
 Glow on the cheek, and sparkle in the eye,—
 Shall with unequal hand my humbler Muse
 Attune the votive lyre:—

——Source of those joys
 Which warm'd my youthful bosom, ere the mind
 Tasted the polish'd scenes of courtly life,
 The soft attractions of the graceful Fair,
 Musick's sweet cadence, and the varying Dance;
 SHOOTING! to thee I dedicate the song:
 For oft, when winter's festal hours relax'd
 The task's hard penance, and the master's brow,
 Thy pleasures, which anticipating dreams
 Colour'd by fancy's youthful pencil drew,
 Blithsome I counted; then in boyish sport,
 Or where the thrush, or blackbird's glossy jet
 Peer'd o'er the brambled dyke, or berries rare

Tempted

Tempted the roving feldfare, my weak arm
 Rais'd the tube trembling ; but if haply fell
 The flutt'ring victim, then how throb'd the heart,
 How flush'd the little triumph on the cheek !

Such pleas'd me once !—and still, as manhood's prime
 Leads on to ripening skill and nobler spoils,
 True to its source the genuine passion lives.
 Long may it live: and when the lab'ring thought
 Broods on neglected worth, or pines with love,
 Then may it lead me to the mountain top,
 Where Exercise, blithe nymph in buskin green !
 Spangled with dew-drops, hails the blushing morn,
 And wakes to rural sports; whilst the fresh air
 Breathes health and vigour through each op'ning pore,
 And braces every nerve; then bounds the heart,
 And, eager in pursuit of opening joys,
 Forgets the narrow world, and cares below !

IN elder days ere yet despotic sway
 Claim'd, what the ALMIGHTY's liberal hand bestow'd
 For general uses, as a private boon,
 Ufurping what the forest's boundless wilds
 Of animals free-wand'ring unconfin'd
 Inharboured ; or of such whose varied plumes
 Bore them uplifted through the liquid sky,
 Now tow'ring loft as stronger pinion serv'd
 In airy spirals, now with lighter wing
 Dimpling the glassy wave ; our ancestors,
 A free-born race, train'd up their hardy sons,
 With bounding footstep over hill and dale,
 Through thorny brakes or down the dizzy steep,
 Headlong to urge their prey ; and he, whose arm,
 With manliest finew sped the javelin's point,
 Was crown'd the banquet's lord—Such once was fam'd
 ARVIRAGUS, and such the CANTIAN Chiefs, who fir'd
 With freedom's native ardour, undismay'd,
 Rush'd on th' invading foe, 'till ROME's proud host

Grew

Grew pale with envy, and ev'n CÆSAR frown'd;
 Unconquer'd long, from *Cambria's* rugged brow,
 Or deep recesses of *Avoniam* glades,
 In defultory war they still maintain'd
 Stern Independence; till the NORMAN LORD,
 Victorious, join'd in social intercourse,
 And from assimilating manners form'd
 One common people: Then grew feudal rights,
 Each haughty Baron claim'd some wide demesne,
 To range whose ample bound'ry uncontroul'd,
 And rule the petty tyrant of the chace,
 Was Valour's meed; and hence no vassal arm
 Dar'd 'gainst the branching honours of the stag
 Bend the tough bow; to other flights confin'd
 The shaft light-timber'd, from some poplar's height
 Down brought the cooing Dove, or, as he stood
 On the green margin of the sedgy pool,
 Transfix'd the Crane; but still securely sprang
 The whirring Covey, and with rapid flight

Baffled the archer's aim. To other arts
 Then turn'd th' attention, and as oft it mark'd
 The strong-wing'd Falcon, from his towering height
 Down dart upon his prey, th' ungenerous thought
 Suggested, 'gainst the feather'd kind to league
 With their fell tyrant; and with docile hand
 To smoothe his ruffled plumes, and point his flight.
 So yet where rolls the Rhine's impetuous course
 Through many a winding vale, and forest tall,
 The patient German, with incessant toil,
 Trains the young gos-hawk, or the fiercer bird
 On chilly Iceland's topmost summits bred,
 With griping talons to arrest on high
 The heron's flight, or strike the trembling hare.
 Yet still imperfect were the fowler's joys!
 For oft the eager Falcon, gorging high
 His ravening maw, glut with intemperate food,
 Or droop'd with heavy wing, or dimly shot
 His eye's weak glances, and refus'd the flight.

YET

YET such their narrow sports! with fainter light
 As knowledge dawning on the Western world
 Shed her first rays; but when meridian beams
 Blaz'd with full splendor on an after-age,
 Then grew the Arts; and as the letter'd page
 Diffus'd attractive learning, Science rose,
 And searching Nature's inexhausted stores
 Of plants, herbs, minerals, explor'd their pow'rs,
 Relations, qualities; how separate, how
 Compounded, acting:—

—On the furnace side,
 (So fame relates) 'twas then the Chymic Sage
 Some potent med'cine of ingredients rare
 And nitrous qualities, commixing stood,
 And ey'd his work observant; when a spark
 Glanc'd on the vessel's edge,—sudden up-blew
 The ponderous vase, and, with explosive sound
 Of thunder em'lous, into fragments dash'd
 Its bursting sides: Aghast th' affrighted Monk

Stood

Stood trembling, with the sooty ruin whelm'd;
 Yet mark'd th' effect: then pond'ring, how compress'd
 With iron rib in narrower channel bound
 Tenfold had been its fury, soon matur'd
 The hellish thought, and shap'ning into life
 The dread artill'ry, with tremendous peal,
 Like Heav'n's own thunder shook the wond'ring world.

Oh! had the flock, in mercy to mankind;
 Crush'd his devoted frame, or but dissolv'd
 Fair reason's fabrick; then had valour's plume
 Still wav'd pre-em'nent, nor the manly frame,
 Slain with a dastard wound, inglorious fall'n!—
 But hence the gloomy thought! though sleep the brave
 They sleep in conquest, bright-ey'd Glory cries;
 As on the foaming cataract that bursts
 From *Niagara's* summit, with loud roar
 Re-bellowing to old Ocean's distant surge,
 Musing, she sits; or borne with rapt'rous wing

To

To plains of *Abra'm*, hovers o'er the spot
Where fell her fav'rite son.—But stay, my Muse,
Nor tempt, with feeble voice, thoughts that might fire
Th' HOMERIC song, or wake the glowing chords
Of PINDAR's lyre!—

——Far humbler scenes be mine :
In rural pleasures, unambitious sports,
Sweetening life's voyage cheerfully serene,
In wilds sequester'd from the busy world,
Long may this bosom share with thee, my REED,
Its social joys ; and whilst the pleasing thoughts
Freshen the fading tints on mem'ry's page,
Oft may the russet top of *Thornibourne*,
Troughend's rude crags, and *Keilder's* bosky bourne,
Whilom we ranged o'er, float in fairy dreams,
And wake remembrance of those halcyon days
That smil'd on CHIPCHACE:—Hail thou antique seat !
Under whose moss-grown tow'rs, in vaulted hall,
Like Baron old thy hospitable Lord

Pil'd high the cheer; whilst sweetest minstrelsy
 Of oaten-reed, or bagpipe's louder drone
 Attun'd to *Cawdor's* love, to *Malcolm's* arms;
 Warm flow'd the soul, and oft as paus'd the note
 Harmonious, then renew'd the rival tale
 Of mountain feats, and boast of ampler spoils.
 Such were thy joys! and may the cherub Health,
 Spreading his rosy-colour'd wings, diffuse
 Long o'er thy peaceful walls unclouded scenes
 Of social transports, and unenvied bliss!

FORGIVE the Muse, if with digressive lay,
 Sacred to friendship, she awhile hath roam'd
 Enchanted, where her fav'rite theme pursued
 Midst nature's noblest scenery, of rocks
 And boundless champaign, to perfection rais'd
 Heighten'd enjoyment, and instructive taught
 The science of the field: For grateful hence
 Hers be the task, by thought and older use
 Experienc'd,

Experienc'd, on the youthful sportsman's mind
T' impress the rules of art, and shape his toils.

ARM'D with new pow'rs, no more the archer's hand
Stripp'd from sepulchral shades the fable yew;
But now with nimble hammer, as he drew
Hot-reeking from the forge the pliant steel
Shap'd on the anvil, to cylindric form
Reducing, and with waving polish round
Scaling each rougher film, 'till glassy smooth,
Nor longer to the optic ken appear'd
Porous, the finish'd work: with nicest aim
Then on the target pour'd the leaden show'r,
And mark'd its deadly range—Hence ruthless war,
And fell destruction to the feather'd race
Foreboding; but to man the happier lot
Of cheerful sports, and pleasure unrestrain'd:
So once pursued!—but as improving art
Gave a new zest to pastimes, best enjoy'd

When

When rudest, by the fury passions torn,
 Mankind grew envious of each other's joys,
 And pow'r's oppressive hand grasp'd as its own
 The common boon: Oh ALBION ! where thy pride,
 Thy boast of freedom? when tyrannic law
 Wrefts from the arm that vindicates its sway,
 The subject's bulwark, and the soldier's pride!

THRICE happier ye, to whose untutor'd minds
 The claims of civil life as yet unknown,
 On the smooth bosom of the SOUTHERN deep,
 Sprinkled with thousand islands, wander free;
 And undisturb'd your pine-tree groves among,
 Or coral rocks, in social groups pursue
 The gaudy plumage to adorn your loves;
 Or dipping from the light canoe the hook
 Of glossy pearl, bright shining through the waves,
 Entrap the finny brood:—Long, long enjoy
 Your peaceful sports, and may no angry gale,

Swelling

Swelling the sails of envious EUROPE, bear
The chains of slavery to your friendly shores!

BUT rove not, Fancy; check thy wayward flight:
'Tis not the sportsman's province, to indulge
Those thoughts on free-born rights, which whilom fir'd
The soul of SYDNEY, or in HAMPDEN's breast
Glow'd uncorrupted:—

—Other his delights:
Amid the inferior animated tribes
To wander, and with curious eye & observe,
How instinct, which presumptuous man degrades
Beneath his lower reason, governs all,
Points out the various seasons and set times
For incubation, when to shift for food,
And migrate from inclement regions far
To milder climates, and a Southern sky.
For them has Nature giv'n a finer sense,
A secret prescience, to the eye of man

E

Inscrutable,

Inscrutable, to discern the approach
 Of wintry storms; then, mounting on the gale,
 To breast in firm array the streams of air
 And currents which above in counter-tides
 Oppose them; skill'd as mariners to shape
 One steady voyage, and a constant course.

OFt from our shores, when April's genial show'rs,
 And May's fresh beauties of more vivid green,
 Re-animate creation; many a brood
 Wings its reluctant way, compell'd to roam
 Far as the *Orkneys*, or sequester'd wilds
 Of *Lapland*, where no busy fen-man's scythe,
 Or wanton gun, disturbs their joys of love.
 Think, oh, fond youth! when thine own bosom glows
 With kindred transports, as through some lone grove
 Straying with *DELIA*, you avow the flame
 Her downcast eye and deeper-crimson'd blush
 Confesses mutual; as with eager bliss

You

You press her trembling hand; if some rude hind
 With sudden footsteps checks the tender vow,
 How swells the chest, how fires the angry glance!
 They too can feel! and many a poor bird
 Flits round th' unfinished nest, and moans his mate
 Slain by thy ruthless hand: when nature smiles,
 And, waking into life each new-born flow'r,
 Scatters the sweets of spring; when every gale
 Breathes melody; fated with spoils, resign
 The arms of death; nor o'er the plashy heath,
 Screaming to lead you from her callow brood,
 Pursue the Lapwing:—to destroy the seeds
 Of future pleasures by an idle sport,
 And rob the nestling of its parent care,
 How low the triumph, and how poor the prize!

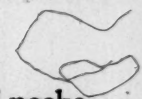
As Nature shifts for man her varying scenes
 In lovely order; where she leads, pursue.
 Soon as the swallow, by meridian beams

Warm'd

Warm'd into life, bursts from her torpid sleep,
 And from the pend'lous cluster as it hangs
 On some cool grotto's side, again returns
 To long forsaken streams, and flowery meads,
 Hail the glad omen, which, severer toils
 Relaxing, courts you to the babbling rill
 Where darts the trout, and as the insect tribe
 Plays o'er the circling eddy, frequent leaps.
 There wrapt, as musing in the sober dream
 Of contemplation, when the lowering sun
 In milder radiance sets, and ev'ning's shade
 Softens the landscape, take thy silent stand,
 And from the tap'ring hazel throwing light
 The mimic fly where zephyr curls the stream,
 Pass the sweet vernal hours in sports serene,
 Congenial to the calm that breathes around.

Whilst sorrow's heavy hour drags slowly on,
 Soon fleet the moments on the wings of joy,

And

And pleasure's sprightly train leads on the year
 In dancing measures: scarce has MAY entwined
 The cowflip garland, scarce the village swain
 Peal'd round the new-shorn mow, when Autumn brown
 Comes like a jovial bacchant, laughing on,
 And calls us to new joys. Ye light-wing'd hours!
 Bear me transported to some mountain rude,
 Far from the lazy South. Now wears the heath
 Its purple mantlet, and the lusty brood, 
 In youthful plumage gay, their speckled necks
 Perk o'er the flow'ring broom, unconscious yet
 Of man's destructive pow'r, and ruthless war.

HERE from some lowly cot, whose straw-stuff'd bed
 Breathes humble thoughts, and checks the glowing dreams
 Of vain ambition, when the glimmering streaks
 Of light, first breaking from the misty top
 Of some sharp precipice, inconstant shoot,—
 Begin the sport; and from the kennel bounds

F

Set

Set free the eager pack: yet not for all
 The meed of liberty: a choicer few
 Th' experienced eye selects, whose shaggy backs,
 Fenc'd with a rougher covering, brave the cold
 Of morning dews, which to the finer breed,
 Nurs'd on the plains of sultry *Arragon*,
 Strike chilly, as with fearful steps and flow
 They climb the steep, and tempt a feeble range.

MARK, where yon herdsman drives his bleating flock
 To search a scanty forage, where the broom
 In scatter'd plots by vivid rings of green
 Encircled, to the distant ken appears
 Like isles on some large map by various tint
 Distinguish'd;—for among the rarer shrub
 Oft will the straggling brood at early dawn
 Feed separate, and with frequent run spread wide
 The od'rous scent;—here loose the panting train,
 And short licentious fallies, oft reprov'd,

Forbid

Forbid no more ; but cheer them bravely on.
 See how they bound amain, now cautious try
 Each hillock's edge, and snuff the passing gale
 With wide-stretch'd nostril; dubious now return,
 And linger o'er the taint the dewy ground
 Receiv'd of evening haunts ; then break away
 Indignant, and with bold excursion range
 Wide o'er the champaign; sudden in mid course
 They stop, and fix immoveable, as those
 Which o'er some arching gate the sculptor's hand
 Shapes from the polish'd block, stedfast they gaze
 Scarce animate, nor move one trembling foot,
 Admiring, where the stronger scent inhales
 Their veteran chief, now crouching low he creeps
 Slow trailing to the brood, as finer sense
 Betrays them shifting ; quicker beats the pulse,
 Each nerve's alarm'd, 'till with a parent's fear
 The flutt'ring mother springs. Yet stay thy arm,
 (So shall she bless thee with a future race)

And

And wait a nobler prize; on gallant wing
 See now he mounts, and challenges the war,
 Shrill as the trump, whilst proudly down the gale
 He sails aloof, and cleaves the yielding air,
 Vain flies the charge; unconquerable thirst
 Of glorious trophy and a peerless fame
 Dazzles the fight, and mocks the anxious aim.

YET on! pursue the sport, whilst the cool breeze
 Freshens each haunt; for when the mid-day sun
 Gilds every summit, and th' horizon round
 Of liquid azure seems a boundless sea,
 Oft in thick matted covering deep involv'd
 Nestles the brood, and to the passing air
 Impervious, emits no scent around
 On the dry fibres of the parching ling.

YET shall the morning hours the toil repay
 With joys abundant; now as fiercer strikes

The

The scorching ray, and languid nature droops,
See on yon airy brow the white sail waves,
And beckons from the field:—

—Now waits the feast

Pil'd o'er some fretted stones, around whose base
In many a tufted seat the purple broom
Luxuriant swells, high overhangs the tent's
Light awning, and, as oft its silver folds
Loose open to the breeze, the raptur'd eye
Sees distant rocks, adown whose rugged sides,
Dashing its white spray high, the torrent roars
Hoarse thund'ring through the vale:—Romantic scene!
Who would not quit for thee the sideboard's blaze,
The damask couch, and all the gilded pomp
Of rich magnificence? Here rosy health,
And appetite that flies the pamper'd guest,
Sit round the sportsman's board.—

—So happier once

In *Arden's* forest liv'd the banish'd Lord

Blest with the few whose faithful bosoms shar'd
 The wreck of greatness, than when gorgeous state
 O'er-canopied his brow; fresh from the chace,
 With spirits light as air, he gayly came,
 And rul'd the sylvan feast; whilst JAKUES told
 The moral tale, or rail'd at fortune's fools.

YE hills of *Keilder*, on your peering tops
 Oft have I wearied fat, and, wrapt in thought,
 Mus'd on the plaintive notes that down the *Tweed*
 Murmur'd from bards of old, when *Scotland* mourn'd
 Her with'ring laurels, and her *DOUGLAS* slain
 In *Cheviot's* rueful fray: or, as soft sleep
 Stole on my eye-lids, oft in magic form
 Seem'd *Birnam's* wood burst from its rooted shade
 In onward march; whilst o'er the blasted heath
 The weird sisters shape their murky flight
 Scowling on *Dunfinane*.——

—— Yet short the dream:

The

The vision flies! and to the waking sense
 The real scenery lives.—Now westward sinks
 The golden orb, and length'ning shadows sweep
 Light on the ground; round each low moss's edge
 Wind gently, and the scented path explore,
 For many a brood hath trod the oozy rim
 Of some cool spring, and to the ev'ning haunt
 Now meditates return; search deep the gill,
 For 'midst the sedgy grass and tangling fern
 Oft lurks the black-cock, and on fullen wing
 Slow-mounting, to the ravish'd fight displays
 The swelling grandeur of his ruffled plumes,
 His neck's smooth sable, and the sanguine crest
 Bright beaming from above. Yet what avails
 The pomp of feather'd pride? in vain expands
 The sweeping pinion, vainly spreads the tail;
 From every arm the instant volley bursts,
 And shares the triumph of his stately fall!

STILL

STILL urge the chace, now the blue vault of heav'n
 High arches o'er the hills, unclouded, bright
 Of purest azure, and whilst active health
 Surmounts the generous toil; for oft the bud
 Of pleasure opes, and ere the ripening flow'r
 Blows to full beauty, comes an angry blast
 And kills its sweetness. Haply one fair morn
 Smiles on our promis'd joys, and hope's bright star
 Beams forth delusive; for soon gathering clouds
 Low'r on each mountain brow, sad harbingers
 Of stormy season, and inclement skies;
 Sudden the gloom o'erspreads, the landscape fades,
 And on the stilly air the tempest broods
 In horrid silence; hollow gusts then rise,
 Shrill howls the North, and sweeping down the vale
 Drives on the pelting storm: now leaves the heights,
 Wrapt in his thin-worn plaid, and homeward wends
 With heavy step and flow, the lingering Herd;
 And oft, as round him throng with closer press

The

The bleating flock, full many forrowing looks
 Casts backwards, and the dreary heath surveys
 With moody scowl, then inly ruminates
 On future ills, by sure prognostic warn'd
 No more to tread again th' unwholesome plain
 'Till Autumn's show'rs are pass'd, and Winter's cold.

So when the last faint ray that trembling shoots
 On polar regions, the sad native fees,
 Condemn'd to linger in the shades of night
 For six slow months; with wild and senseless stare
 He marks th' expiring beam, with greedy eye
 Drinks the last stream of light that dimly flows,
 And sinks desponding to his darken'd world.



[25]
The pleasing flock, full many following looks
Casts backwards, and the strictly steady
With moody slowly, then only resumes
On future ill, by fore prognostic warn'd
No more to tread again the unwholesome plain
Till Autumn's flow'rs are past, and Winter's cold.

So when the last faint ray that trembling lights
On polar regions, the last native leaf
Condens'd to linger in the shades of night
For six slow months; with wild and tender's care
He marks the expiring beam, with greedy eye
Drinks the last stream of light that dimly flows
And sinks departing to his dark'ning world.



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